



Restoring Rangeland Health Through the Utilization of Juniper for Chips & Sawlogs Klamath Falls Resource Area, BLM Lakeview District

Over the last decade, the Klamath Falls Resource Area (RA) of the BLM Lakeview District began to analyze and test an array of methods to treat juniper woodlands. The treatments included small experimental-type contracts to cut and remove juniper for processing at local mills. The Klamath Falls RA is accomplishing multiple resource objectives through biomass utilization by involving local stakeholders in the process.

Western juniper encroachment is a serious problem, negatively affecting rangeland health throughout central and eastern Oregon. In parts of Oregon, western juniper is out-competing native pine trees and sagebrush and bitterbrush shrubs. Limiting juniper's spread will improve wildlife habitat and forest and rangeland health.

To counteract juniper encroachment, the Klamath Falls RA is 1) providing juniper to processing facilities for chipping to produce hardboard siding and 2) providing juniper sawlogs for landscape and mining timbers; both strategies meet resource objectives and benefit local economies. Since 2000, 800 acres of juniper sawlogs have been yarded used at a local juniper mill to produce a variety of wood products. In 2005, the Klamath Falls RA began implementing the commercial use of juniper as chips or sawlogs to reduce hazardous fuels, restore rangeland health, and support local economies.

By using existing timber sale contracts, the Gerber Stew Stewardship Contract, and Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantities (IDIQ) contracts for treating hazardous fuels, the Klamath Falls RA successfully implemented ecosystem management and accomplished National Fire Plan goals including the utilization of forest by-products in lieu of burning. Another key component of their success is the Klamath Falls RA's ability to partner with local processing facilities.

In 2004, the Klamath Falls RA collaborated with a biomass contractor to experiment with chipping western juniper that had been cut utilizing the fuels IDIQ contract. The material was scheduled to be burned, however Klamath Falls RA personnel made adjustments to their program of work to meet targets and provide for this collaborative experiment. The biomass contractor worked with a secondary processing mill to develop a viable product (hardboard siding). Based on the results, the Klamath Falls RA continued to collaborate with the biomass contractor and in 2004, the contractor yarded 530 acres of cut western juniper for chips.

In 2005, 300 acres of juniper sawlogs, (or 630 tons) was sold to a local contractor who in turn sold the material to the local juniper manufacturing mill. Under the Gerber Stew Stewardship contract, 230 acres of western juniper was cut, yarded, chipped and delivered to the hardboard plant; 2,040 tons of chips was delivered to the mill and 400 acres was tasked for implementation.

Klamath Falls RA personnel have demonstrated their commitment to the National Fire Plan and its goals by designing projects in collaboration with local industry. Klamath Falls RA has exceeded expectations by taking the initiative to integrate utilization into their program of work while continuing to attain annual targets.